CLAIMS (MARKED-UP)

[C1]   We claim:

[C2] (Amended)
    1. A system of using anti-spam points for email processing, comprising:

a)   means for providing one or more web addresses, with choice of languages, accessible by email users;

b)   means for allowing said email users to register to become said system's registered email users;

b) c)   means for interacting with said email users through said web addresses to ensure that a real human being is interacting with said system;

c) d)   means for generating one or more unique fingerprint keys for said registered email users, said fingerprint key is a string of ASCII characters assigned to or chosen by said registered email users, and said fingerprint key is optionally encrypted;

e)   means for automatically or manually inserting said fingerprint keys into sai registered email users' email messages;

d) f)   means for issuing a fixed or varied number of one or more types of anti-spam points to said registered email users, and adding a fixed or varied number of said anti-spam points to said registered email users' accounts after a fixed or varied period of time has elapsed;

e) g)   means for limiting the number of said anti-spam points said registered email users could use within a period of time;

f) h)   means for setting a same or different rate limit on the usage of said anti-spam points for each sub-periods of equal or non-equal duration within a period of time;

i)   means for deducting one or more of said anti-spam points from said registered email users' account for each of their email message that is delivered to an email recipient who is or isn't a registered email user;

g) j)   means for monitoring said <u>registered</u> users' email usage patterns, and making adjustments to the availability of said <u>registered</u> users' anti-spam points;

h) k)   means for selling <u>various types of</u> said anti-spam points to said <u>registered</u> email users, and tracking each <u>registered email</u> user's anti-spam points by type and quantity;

i) l)   means for owners of email servers to <u>register and</u> establish accounts for their servers to earn and redeem said anti-spam points;

j) m)   means for tracking the number of anti-spam points earnings processed by each email server;

k) n)   means for maintaining one or more databases containing registered email user profiles;

o)   <u>means for extracting from an email message its sender's profile for comparison with the record in said databases;</u>

p)   <u>means for encoding said sender's profile into a string or field;</u>

l) q)   means for receiving <u>from an email recipient's email server</u> one or more encoded or non-encoded strings or fields containing email sender's profile ~~from the email servers~~, and decoding said strings or fields for comparison with the record in said ~~database or~~ databases;

m) r)   means for comparing the information from said strings or fields with said ~~user's~~ <u>email senders'</u> record in said databases;

n) s)   means for sending a message to said email sender requesting registration if said system has determined that said ~~user's~~ <u>email sender's</u> profile has not <u>been created or has not</u> met certain preset criteria;

o) t)   means for ~~acknowledging~~ <u>commanding</u> said <u>email recipient's</u> email servers to ~~make~~ <u>deliver</u> said email <u>message to said email recipient if said sender's profile has met or exceeded certain preset criteria;</u> ~~available for downloading if said criteria has been met or exceeded;~~

p) u)   means for <u>registered email users</u> ~~email recipients~~ to earn anti-spam points by receiving advertiser's emails;

q) v) means for notifying ~~owners of registered~~ email servers and registered email users ~~email recipients~~ of the anti-spam points they have accumulated, and providing ~~a way~~ ways for them to redeem their accumulated anti-spam points for money, goods or services;

r) w) means for limiting the number of registered accounts assigned to each individual email user;

s) x) means for enabling ~~email users~~ said registered email users to send emails via one or more provided web pages;

t) y) means for said registered email senders to set one or more threshold ~~value or range~~ values or ranges for an email's available anti-spam points to be charged;

u) z) means for said registered email recipients to set one or more threshold ~~value or range~~ values or ranges for accepting the delivery of an email;

v) aa) means for said registered email recipients to set one or more threshold ~~value or range~~ values or ranges for accepting the delivery of one or more ~~type or category~~ types or categories of emails;

w) bb) means for domain owners to issue anti-spam points to registered email users belonging to their own domain for emails delivered only to within their own domain;

x) cc) means for authenticating said registered email senders, optionally with the use of cryptographic software generated digital signatures;

dd) means for setting, or for newly registered email recipients to set, a fixed or varied initial period of time for permitting all incoming emails to be delivered to said newly registered email recipient;

ee) means for inserting text messages and/or hyperlinks to said registered email senders' email messages prior to their delivery to said registered email recipients;

ff) means for assigning one or more serial numbers to each email.

[C3] (Amended)
2. The system of claim 1, wherein said recipient's email server in ~~l) and o)~~ q_ and t) can be substituted by said recipient's email client software or a plug-in to any available email client software.

[C4]   3. The system of claim 1, wherein means in a) can be provided as a telephone number or facsimile number for registration.

[C5]   4. The system of claim 1, wherein said amount of anti-spam points is variably issued in accordance with said sender's category and registration process.

[C6] (Amended)
5. The system of claim 1, wherein said fingerprint key is either revealed to, or concealed from the email recipient; and wherein said fingerprint key is valid for a limited time duration and a new fingerprint key is generated for said registered email users when the current fingerprint key expires.

[C7]   6. The system of claim 1, wherein said databases of email users include a subset or a super set of fields corresponding to said email users.

[C8]   7. The system of claim 1, wherein said encoded string is plain text, or an output of said required information from any kind of encoding algorithm that is possibly used by one skilled in the art.

[C9]   8. The system of claim 1, wherein said sender's email is held in said recipient's email server, or in said recipient's own storage media as specified by said recipient's email client.

[C10] (Amended)
9. The system of claim 1, wherein said email recipients ~~is~~ are allowed to redeem their earned anti-spam points for money, goods, or services when said anti-spam points in their accounts have reached a threshold value, or when the monetary value associated with said anti-spam points has reached a threshold value, or when said ~~recipient makes~~ recipients make a request for redemption.

[C11]   10. The system of claim 1, wherein the monetary value of the purchase of a number of paid anti-spam points is equivalent to or different from the monetary value of the redemption of those same numbers of anti-spam points.

[C12] (Amended)

11. The system of claim 1, wherein any of the means in ~~a) thru x)~~ a) thru ee) can be included or excluded in any combination thereof.

[C13] (Amended)

12. A method for controlling the delivery of email for the system of claim 1, comprising the steps of:

a) recipient's email server or client receiving an email from a sender, said email including an address field containing said sender's email address, a message field optionally containing said sender's fingerprint key issued by said system, optionally containing the type and number of anti-spam point, and optionally containing said sender's threshold value or range for paying out anti-spam points;

b) recipient's email server or client encoding said sender's email address, fingerprint key, threshold value or range for paying out anti-spam points, the type and number of anti-spam points born by said email, said recipient's email address, recipient's threshold value or range for charging paid anti-spam points, or any combination thereof;

c) recipient's email server sending said encoded information to said system for authentication;

d) if said sender's email address is not on record, or said sender's fingerprint key does not match that of said record, or said sender's anti-spam points are insufficient, then said system: i. denying authentication; ii. acknowledging said recipient's email server of denied authentication, and requesting said email server or email client to hold said sender's email for further discretion; iii. sending a registration request to said sender; iv. approving said email if said sender registers within a predetermined period of time; v. deleting said email or adding a flag to said email if said sender fails to register within the predetermined period of time;

e) said system validating authentication and making said email available for delivery, optionally inserting text messages and/or hyperlinks to the body of said email, ~~downloading,~~ and deducting appropriate quantities and appropriate types of anti-spam points from said sender's record; and adding appropriate quantities and appropriate types of anti-spam points to recipient's record.

[C14] (Amended)

13. The method of claim 12, wherein said registration request is issued from the recipient's email server or email client.

[C15] 14. The method of claim 12, wherein step v. is replaced with "adding a flag to said email and/or making said email available to said recipient for deleting, downloading, filtering and/or allowing exploitation of sender's email by said recipient."

[C16] 15. The method of claim 12, wherein said sender elects to omit sending said fingerprint key, and while said system requests for registration, the request provides a link to a web address where said sender inputs his or her fingerprint key.